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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 12 July 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 14 June 1993 which the 43rd Pugwash Conference has addressed to the President of the United States of America, Mr. William Clinton (see annex).

In view of this document's relevance to the work of the General Assembly, I should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex could be circulated as an official General Assembly document under item 71 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Manuel TELLO
Permanent Representative of Mexico

* A/48/50.

ANNEX

Letter dated 14 June 1993 from the members of the Pugwash Council attending the 43rd Pugwash Conference addressed to the President of the United States of America

We are writing, as all of the members of the Pugwash Council attending this year's Pugwash Conference, to urge you to extend the current moratorium of the United States of America on nuclear explosive tests and to reject the arguments for additional testing before conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We applaud your commitment to the achievement of a CTBT and the embodiment of that goal in the Hatfield-Exon-Mitchell Amendment to the 1993 Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act. We believe that a resumption of United States testing would delay - and might well completely undermine - the attainment of this critical objective. Both the delay in progress towards a CTBT and the perverse signals sent by the testing itself, moreover, would surely impair, perhaps fatally, the prospects for a positive outcome of the extension Conference scheduled for 1995 of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The resulting damage to the most vital security interests of the United States and the world cannot possibly be compensated for by the minuscule benefits ascribed to a resumption of testing by its proponents.

Let us be more specific. A resumption of United States testing, no matter how brief its duration or how narrow its stated purposes, would lead to:

(a) A resumption of testing by Russia, a strengthening of the position of hardliners in Russia and the creation of a further impediment to favourable resolution of the precarious nuclear-weapons status of Ukraine;

(b) A resumption of testing by France and a strengthening of the position of those in France who would like to block attainment of a CTBT altogether;

(c) Assured continuation of testing by China, quite possibly extending beyond 1996.

These outcomes would weaken support for and complicate the negotiation of a CTBT; would squander any leadership and influence the United States and the other declared nuclear-weapon States might otherwise hope to exert in the NPT extension Conference; and would strengthen pro-bomb factions in nuclear-threshold States, at best reducing the chance of engaging these States in the NPT and CTBT regimes and at worst propelling them towards nuclear tests of their own.

The "benefits" being offered in exchange for these appalling consequences are said to be such improvements in the reliability, safety and performance of the warheads of the United States and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as might be accomplished with the addition of 15 (or fewer) further tests beyond the thousand such explosions that these two countries have already conducted. But what reliability problems in a United States nuclear

arsenal numbering several thousands of warheads of well-tested types could imperil the credibility of the deterrent function this arsenal is said to serve (or, if they existed, could be resolved by just a handful of tests)? How much additional safety could a few more tests buy, after nearly 50 years of prior learning about how to make these devices safe? And if, as some have suggested, the perfection of a "new" warhead is on the testing agenda, what need for such a thing can the United States or the United Kingdom plausibly assert in the post-cold-war world, and what are likely to be the consequences, for proliferation incentives, of asserting it?

We find it difficult to believe, Mr. President, that hidden in the classified details are rationales to persuade an objective analyst that these outwardly meagre benefits of a few tests are really large enough to offset the huge costs and risks that resuming testing would entail. It seems more probable that the proponents of such a resumption are hoping for just what you and we would wish to prevent - namely, that a few more tests will lead to a great many more, by pushing a CTBT once more out of reach. Please do not allow that to happen.

Professor Joseph Rotblat (United Kingdom), President of Pugwash

Professor Francesco Calogero (Italy), Secretary-General of Pugwash

Professor John P. Holdren (United States), Chairman of the Pugwash Executive Committee

Professor Maciej Nalecz (Poland), Chairman of the Pugwash Council

Professor Ogunlade Davidson (Sierra Leone), Member of the Executive Committee

Dr. Virginia Gamba (Argentina), Member of the Executive Committee

Academician Vitalii I. Goldanskii (Russia), Member of the Executive Committee

Dr. Venance Journé (France), Member of the Executive Committee

Dr. Martin M. Kaplan (Switzerland), Member of the Executive Committee

Professor Bhalchandra M. Udgaonkar (India), Member of the Executive Committee

Professor Gothom Arya (Thailand), Member of the Council

Professor Gabriel Baramki (West Bank), Member of the Council

Professor Anna Maria Cetto (Mexico), Member of the Council

Professor Ubiratan D'Ambrosio (Brazil), Member of the Council

Professor Hans-Peter Duerr (Germany), Member of the Council

General Emmanuel Erskine (Ghana), Member of the Council

Professor Esmat Ezz (Egypt), Member of the Council

Professor Serguei Kapitza (Russia), Member of the Council

Professor Martin M. Kaplan (Switzerland), Member of the Council

Professor Michiji Konuma (Japan), Member of the Council

Mr. Sverre Lodgaard (Norway), Member of the Council

Professor Amnon Pazy (Israel), Member of the Council

Professor Sebastian Pease (United Kingdom), Member of the Council

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